# Circuit Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) Readiness Assessment Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide circuits with a framework for conducting a CFSR readiness assessment of their local child welfare system, and to provide a format for documenting the CFSR assessment process and findings.  This guidance is organized as follows:

- Purpose of the circuit CFSR assessment
- Process for conducting the circuit CFSR assessment
- Instructions for completing the circuit CFSR assessment

## Purpose of the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment

The CFSR Readiness Assessment process provides the circuit an opportunity to evaluate strengths and areas needing improvement across seven systemic factors. These systemic factors provide a framework for the delivery of child welfare services and achievement of safety, permanency and well-being outcomes. The circuit also examines data to assess the effectiveness of the child welfare system and evaluates performance on six national standard indicators.  These activities provide a basis for carrying out continuous quality improvement efforts.

In addition, information from the circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment is shared with other program areas to inform plans for statewide training, residential treatment, technical assistance, contractors, practice guidance and policy development.

The evaluation of strength or area needing improvement on each exploratory issue and overall systemic factor are determined by the circuit and reviewed by the CFSR Coordinator and QA staff.  During the assessment and/or onsite phase(s) of the review, practice issues and systemic factors may be identified as contributing reasons for specific performance items as areas needing improvement. The circuits will be asked to address practice issues and systemic factors in circuit specific Program Improvement Plans (PIP).

## Process for conducting the circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment

Circuits are strongly encouraged to convene a team of representatives of staff and community stakeholders (e.g. parent/foster parent/adoptive parent, youth, mental health, public health, schools, court and other child/family services representatives) as the first step in the CFSR process.   Stakeholders bring a broad and meaningful perspective to the evaluation of systemic factors and performance related to safety, permanency and well-being. As a result, stakeholders need to understand their vital role in the CFSR so they can reserve time on their schedules to participate.

The second step in the process would be to convene a team of representatives of staff from all levels and community stakeholders to complete the readiness assessment process.  In

order to build an efficient and effective team as well as ensuring interest and commitment, a team or steering committee of approximately 12 people is suggested. Additional groups or sub-committees can be added as necessary. Staff members and community stakeholders who participate in the circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment process also provide a valuable resource to the development of the circuit's PIP.

The 13$^{th}$, 22$^{nd}$, 23$^{rd}$, 25$^{th}$, 26$^{th}$, 31$^{st}$, and 35$^{th}$ circuits are participating in the Fostering Court Improvement project which emphasizes multidisciplinary collaboration in the examination of child welfare data and implementation of strategies to address areas of deficiency. These teams meet on a regular basis and may provide a forum for conducting the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment. Additional stakeholders may need to be invited to these meetings to participate in the assessment.

The circuit may also consider options such as focus groups with community stakeholders or consumer groups, or consumer surveys as ways to gather information for the readiness assessment. Connecting the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment process to other circuit needs assessment or planning requirements, such as COA, maximizes the use of time and resources to conducting the assessment.

The following are suggested steps to engage internal and external stakeholders to prepare for the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment.

1. Send out invitations to community members (Youth, Juvenile Officers, Judges, GAL's, mental health providers, public health providers, educators, city and county government, resource providers, CASA, contracted service providers, Tribal representatives and any other providers who impact the services for children and families in their circuits). This letter should be an invitation to a meeting to explain the need and purpose of the assessment. Prior to the meeting, the Circuit Manager should follow up the letter with a phone call to get a commitment from the community member to attend the meeting and to be a part of the process.

2. The Meeting should explain the assessment process will be looking at practice and the systems which impact outcomes for children and families. Within this context, there should be information about the first CFSR and the outcome of the PIP. Stakeholders should understand the impact of the first CFSR and PIP and how we will be using the information to improve practice and systemic issues.

3. Develop and define work groups as needed. Workgroups could be associated to any of the seven outcomes or systemic factors wherein the circuit believes improvements must be made.

4. Follow-up meetings should be scheduled, at which time, the groups would reconvene to discuss their findings; challenges in obtaining needed information; develop the circuit's subsequent PIP. Each group could provide a written report and contribute to the circuit's assessment.

# Instructions for completing the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment

## Part I. General Information

The circuit is requested to designate a person who will be primarily responsible for completing the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment and providing contact information.

## Part II. Systemic Factors

Instructions and guidance for completing the assessment of each systemic factor is contained in this section of the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment Guide. Use the exploratory statements/questions to assess and describe the capacity and quality of the circuit's child welfare system. Discuss and evaluate how the system works, including strengths and promising practices.

## Part III. Safety and Permanency Data

Review and analyze the data tables related to the national standards and compare the circuit's data to statewide data and examine areas showing significant variation. Where appropriate, note when the data does not appear to adequately reflect the circuit's performance and explore all factors which may contribute to such a performance.

## Part IV. Assessment of Safety, Permanency and Well-Being Performance

Based on examination of safety and permanency data provided in Part III, respond to each of the safety, permanency and/ well-being exploratory statements/questions.

## Part V. Assessment of Strengths and Needs

The last section provides a brief summary of findings from the Circuit CFSR Readiness Assessment. Summarize systemic and practice strengths as well as areas needing improvement. Identify specific issues which warrant further examination and discussion.

# PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

| Circuit Information | |
|---|---|
| **Circuit Manager:** | **Circuit Number:** |
| **Counties:** | |

| Contact person for the Readiness Assessment |
|---|
| Name: _____<br><br>Title: _____<br><br>Address: _____<br><br>_____<br><br>_____<br><br>Phone: (\_\_\_\_) _____  Fax: (\_\_\_\_\_) _____ |
| E-Mail: |

# PART II: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Use the following exploratory issues to describe and assess the capacity and quality of the circuit's use of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reporting. Describe how the system works, including strengths and promising practices. Identify barriers to an effective system and initial plans to address barriers.  In the discussion of each item, describe the practice and self assess the outcomes.

**A. Local Office Information System Capacity**
   1. Discuss how effectively the circuit can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child who is in foster care in the circuit.  In responding, consider the accessibility and usefulness of the information in carrying out the circuit's responsibilities.
   2. Discuss any changes in performance and practice since the conversion to FACES.
   3. Discuss circuit approach to using data (for example, for planning and management purposes).
   4. Discuss the extent to which the information is complete, accurate, and current and includes the locations of all foster children, including those in relative care, unlicensed placements, and voluntary placement.

**B. Case Review System**
   1. Discuss how effective the circuit is able to meet the requirement for each child in foster care having a written case plan with all the required elements within timeframes. Consider what the circuit has in place to monitor compliance with the case plan requirements including scheduling and holding timely PPRTs.  Refer to Outcomes

Measure #12 (Children with Timely Completion of PPRT within 6 Months) and report data for the four quarters of FY 2007 in the table below.

| Outcome #12 - Children with Timely Completion of PPRT within 6 Months | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % Meeting PPRT Criteria | % Meeting PPRT Criteria | % Meeting PPRT Criteria | % Meeting PPRT Criteria |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

2. Discuss how the circuit meets the requirement that parents of children in care and age appropriate children participate in the development of the child's case plan. In responding, consider their participation in activities such as identifying strengths and needs, determining goals, requesting services and evaluating their progress. Refer to Supervisor Case Review (SCR) Results #18 (Child and family involvement in case planning) and report circuit data for the most recent four quarters in the table below.

| SCR Results #18 – Child and family involvement in case planning | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of Active Involvement | % of Active Involvement | % of Active Involvement | % of Active Involvement |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

3. Discuss how the circuit meets the requirement of permanency hearings occurring within prescribed timeframes. In responding, consider how the court and the juvenile office are engaged in the process and how judicious hearings promote the timely and appropriate achievement of permanency goals, including TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
4. Discuss how the circuit meets the requirement to provide foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers with notice of an opportunity to be heard in reviews or hearings.

## C. Quality Assurance System
1. Discuss how the circuit has developed and implemented standards to ensure foster children are provided quality services to protect their safety, permanency and well being. Consider strategies implemented as a result of the PIP or other identified need and how the circuit utilized the results to improve future practice decisions. (For example, if stability was identified in the circuit as a concern what strategies were put into practice to improve and what are the outcomes to date.)
2. Discuss the involvement of staff, service providers and other stakeholders in the continuous quality improvement (CQI) process and how information/data from these activities are used with all levels of staff and stakeholders in the circuit. (i,e: do you look at data at CQI meeting?; what do you do with the data?) What changes have been made as a result of using the data?
3. Discuss any successes or barriers the circuit faces in question #2 in conducting the CQI process.

### D. Staff and Provider Training

1. Discuss the process the circuit utilizes to train new staff. In responding, provide information on length of time before new staff attends basic training, when or if new staff are assigned cases and how many?
2. Discuss the circuit's on-the-job training process for new staff. Does the circuit have a mentoring process? If so, describe. How does the circuit utilize the OJT manual provided by the training unit?
3. Discuss how the circuit provides staff with opportunities for on-going training, both in house or by the community, (i.e, the use of the Employee Learning Center and Human Resource Center trainings.) How does the circuit evaluate the training's effectiveness?
4. Describe the circuit's process for providing training to service providers including private agencies or contractors.
5. Discuss the process the circuit utilizes to train new foster/adoptive parents and what types of on-going training opportunities are available? In responding, consider the availability of training sites and any other barriers.

### E. Service Array and Resource Development

1. Discuss the circuit's availability and effectiveness on 1) placing and maintaining children in safe environments, 2) enabling children to remain home safely when reasonable, 3) helping children in foster care and adoptive homes achieve timely permanency, 4) supporting adoptive families after placement and finalization, and 5) helping youth to prepare for independent living.
2. Discuss the availability or accessibility of services and resources on major population groups in the circuit, for example, the Native American population, other ethnic or racial groups, youth served, language groups, or children in rural and/or urban areas.
3. Discuss the circuit's service and resource availability and accessibility barriers to individualized services. In responding, what are the strategies to address the barriers? For example, how are clients with no transportation served?

### F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community

1. Discuss how the circuit engages key stakeholders whose involvement is critical to effective planning in planning efforts or barriers to collaborating effectively with them; include youth, Native Americans, birth parents, schools, and courts.
2. Discuss how the circuit uses the input of stakeholders, including courts and their ongoing involvement in evaluating and reporting on progress or barriers.

### G. Foster/Adoptive/Relative/Kinship Home Licensing, Approval, and Recruitment

1. Discuss the timeframe for the completion of foster/adoptive/relative/kinship home studies and the process of reviewing and updating them. In responding, identify any barriers to timely completion.
2. Discuss the circuit's monitoring of the licensing process, including the different types of licenses such as initial or probationary licenses and their completion.
3. Discuss the circuit's process for conducting background checks for all prospective foster/adoptive families. In responding discuss the timeliness of completion of checks

4. Discuss the circuit's foster/adoptive home recruitment and retention strategies and the effectiveness of the recruitment plan. Refer to Outcome Measure #16 on the number of new Family Resource Providers and report data for the last four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.

| Outcome #16 - Increase Number of Family Resource Providers | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quarter 1 | | | Quarter 2 | | | Quarter 3 | | | Quarter 4 | | |
| Foster | Adopt | Rel/Kin | Foster | Adopt | Rel/Kin | Foster | Adopt | Rel/Kin | Foster | Adopt | Rel/Kin |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

5. Discuss recruitment efforts for locating families who are ethnically and racially diverse.
6. Discuss the circuit's effectiveness in working with the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children and agreements with other jurisdictions for the placement of children.

# PART III. SAFETY AND PERMANENCY DATA

| Safety Indicator 1: Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment {national standard: 94.6% or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal - 94.6% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Circuit Data | State Data | |
| | | 94.4% | |

| Safety Indicator 2: Absence of Maltreatment of Children in Foster Care { national standard: 99.68% or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal - 99.68% |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Circuit Data | State Data | |
| | | 99.66% | |

| Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification {national standard: 122.6 or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Component A: Timeliness of Reunification**<br>The timeliness component is composed of three timeliness individual measures. | **Circuit Data** | **State Data** | |
| **Measure A1- Exits to reunification in less than 12 months:** Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the year shown, who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent was reunified in less than 12 months from the latest removal from home? | | **68.2%** | 75.2% or higher |
| **Measure A2 – Exits to reunification, median stay:** Of all children discharged from foster care (FC) to reunification in the year shown, who had been in FC for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of the latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification? | | **7.7 months** | 5.4 months (lower is better) |
| **Measure A3 – Entry cohort reunification in < 12 months:** Of all children entering FC for the first time in the 6 month period just prior to the year shown, and who remained in FC for 8 days or longer, what percent was discharged from FC to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? | | **38.4%** | 48.4% or higher |
| **Component B: Permanency of Reunification**<br>The permanency component has one measure. | | | |
| **Measure B1 – Re-entries to foster care in less than 12 months:** Of all children discharged from FC to reunification in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percent re-entered FC in less than 12 months from the date of discharge? | | **8.1%** | 9.9% or lower |

| Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions {national standard: 106.4 or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Component A: Timeliness of Adoptions of Children Discharged from Foster Care.** There are two individual measures of this component. | **Circuit Data** | **State Data** | |
| **Measure A1 – Exits to adoption in less than 24 months:** Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year shown, what percent was discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from the home? | | **36.3%** | 36.6% or higher |
| **Measure A2 – Exits to adoption, median length of stay:** Of all children who were discharged from FC to a finalized adoption in the year shown, what was the median length of stay in FC (in months) from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption? | | **29.3 months** | 27.3 months (lower is better |
| **Component B: Progress Toward Adoption for Children in FC for 17 Months or Longer.** There are two individual measures. | | | |
| **Measure B1 – Children in care 17+ months, adopted by the end of the year.** Of all children in FC on the first day of the year shown who were in FC for 17 continuous months or longer (and who, by the last day of the year shown, were not discharged from FC with a discharge reason to live with relative, reunify, or guardianship), what percent was discharged from FC to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year shown. | | **15.1%** | 22.7% or higher |
| **Measure B2 – Children in care 17+ months achieving legal freedom within 6 months:** Of all children in foster care (FC) on the first day of the year shown who were in FC for 17 continuous months or longer, and were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, what percent became legally free for adoption during the first 6 months of the year shown? Legally free means that there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father. This calculation excludes children who, by the end of the first 6 months of the year shown had discharged from FC to "reunification," "live with relative," or "guardianship." | | **14.3%** | 10.9% or higher |
| **Component C: Progress Toward Adoption of Children who are Legally Free for Adoption.** There is one measure for this component. | | | |
| **Measure C1 – Legally free children adopted in less than 12 months:** Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12 month period prior to the year shown (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), what percent was discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months of becoming legally free? | | **72.2%** | 53.7% or higher |

| Permanency Composite 3:  Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time {national standard: 121.7 or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Component A:  Achieving permanency for Children in FC for Long Periods of Time.**  This component has two  measures. | **Circuit Data** | **State Data** | |
| **Measure A1- Exits to permanency prior to 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for children in care for 24+ months.**  Of all children in FC for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year shown, what percent was discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and by the end of the fiscal year?  A permanent home is defined as having a discharge reason of adoption, guardianship, or reunification (including living with relative). | | **21.4%** | 29.1% or higher |
| **Measure A2 – Exits to permanency for children with TPR:**  of all children who were discharged  from FC in the year shown, and who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported in FACES for both mother and father), what percent was discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday? | | **96.0%** | 98% or higher |
| **Component B:  Growing up in foster care** This component has one measure. | | | |
| **Measure B1 – Children emancipated who were in FC for three years or more.**  Of all children who, during the year shown, either (1) were discharged from FC prior to age 18 with a discharge reason of emancipation, or (2) reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday while in FC care, what percent were in FC three years or longer? | | **57.0%** | 37.5% or lower |

| Permanency Composite 4:  Placement Stability {national standard: 101.5 or higher} | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | 12-Month Period Ending 9/30/07 | Goal |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Circuit Data** | **State Data** | |
| **Measure 1: Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for less than 12 months.** Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 8 days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? | | **82.5%** | 86.0% or higher |
| **Measure 2: Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 12 to 24 months.** Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? | | **58.9%** | 65.4% or higher |
| **Measure 3: Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 24+ months.** Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? | | **26.1%** | 41.8% or higher |

# PART IV – ASSESSMENT OF SAFETY, PERMANENCY AND WELL-BEING PERFORMANCE

**A. Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**

**Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.** How effective is the circuit in responding to incoming reports of child maltreatment in a timely manner?

1. Discuss the circuit's performance on timeliness of initial child victim contact. In responding, consider how data and data quality informs and drives local practice. Refer to Outcome Measure #1 (Improve Timeliness of Initial Child Contact) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.

| Outcome #1 - Improve Timeliness of Initial Child Contact | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of contact within 24 hours | % of contact within 24 hours | % of contact within 24 hours | % of contact within 24 hours |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

2. Discuss casework practices and resources which impact the timeliness of initial child contact, such as local protocols for emergencies and after hours, the availability of bilingual workers and other unique issues.
3. Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit faces to successfully address timeliness of initial child contact, including factors external to the agency.

**Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.** How effective is the circuit in reducing the reoccurrence of maltreatment of children?

1. Discuss the circuit's performance on reducing the reoccurrence of abuse. In responding, consider how data and data quality informs and drives local practice. Refer to Outcome Measure #3 (Reduce Reoccurrence of Abuse) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.

| Outcome #3 - Reduce Reoccurrence of Abuse | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % with prior substantiated within 6 mos. | % with prior substantiated within 6 mos. | % with prior substantiated within 6 mos. | % with prior substantiated within 6 mos. |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

2. Discuss any patterns in the circumstances, characteristics, and demographics of children who experience repeat maltreatment.
3. Discuss local casework practices and resources affecting this item such as the availability of services to families.

**A. Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

**Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.** How effective is the circuit in providing services, when appropriate, to prevent removal of children from their home?
1. Discuss the circuit's effectiveness in maintaining children in their homes. In responding, include community resources utilized to achieve this goal.
2. Discuss circuit successes/challenges in providing services to maintaining children in their homes.
3. Discuss unique characteristics and initiatives the circuit may have which impact this item, either positively or negatively.

**Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management.** How effective is the circuit in reducing the risk of harm to children, including those in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?
1. Discuss the circuit's practice for the on-going assessment of child safety and risk of harm when children remain in their own homes. Include any strengths and/or challenges in the circuit for consistent assessment processes.
2. Discuss circuit's performance on Outcome Measure #4 (Reduce Incidence of Child Abuse in Foster Care) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below. Discuss any factors which may have brought about an increase/decrease in this measure and any strategies the circuit utilized to reduce the risk of maltreatment to children in foster care.

| Outcome #4 - Reduce Incidence of Child Abuse/Neglect in Foster Care | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % with POE report during the past 12 months. | % with POE report during the past 12 months. | % with POE report during the past 12 months. | % with POE report during the past 12 months. |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

3. Discuss the circuit's follow-up steps when an incident of maltreatment occurs in a licensed resource home.

**B. Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

**Item 5: Foster care re-entries.** How effective is the circuit in preventing multiple entries of children in foster care?
1. Describe local strategies, casework practices and resources used to prevent re-entry into foster care. For example, are adequate services in place before the child is integrated back in the home?
2. Identify any key stakeholders (internal and external), including any factors or issues influencing the circuit's performance.
3. Discuss strengths and/or challenges faced by the circuit in preventing re-entry.

4. Discuss circuit's performance on re-entry into foster care.  Refer to Outcome measure #14 (Reduce Re-entry into Foster Care) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.  In responding, consider how data quality informs and drives local practice.

| Outcome #14 - Reduce Re-entry into Foster Care | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % re-entering 12 months following exit. | % re-entering 12 months following exit. | % re-entering 12 months following exit. | % re-entering 12 months following exit. |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

**Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.**  How effective is the circuit in providing placement stability for children in foster care (that is, minimizing placement changes for children in foster care)?
1. Describe local strategies, casework practices and resources which impact placement stability for children in foster care, such as the use of shelters or relative placements.
2. Identify any key stakeholders (internal or external) and include any factors which influence the circuit's performance.
3. Discuss circuit's performance on placement stability.  Refer to Outcome measure #13a (Reduce the Number of Placements Children Experience in Foster Care) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.  Discuss the implications of this data and how it affects permanency for children.

| Outcome #13a - Reduce the Number of Placements of Children in Foster Care | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % with 2 or fewer placements | % with 2 or fewer placements | % with 2 or fewer placements | % with 2 or fewer placements |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

4. Discuss strengths and/or challenges faced by the circuit in placement stability.

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child.**  How effective is the agency in determining the most appropriate permanency goal for children on a timely basis when they enter foster care?
1. Describe circuit strategies, casework practices and resources which impact permanency goals for children and the timeliness to establishing goals.  In responding to this item discuss results from local case reads, COA reviews and other available data.
2. Discuss the circuit's strengths and/or challenges of concurrent planning.
3. Describe the court's role in determining a permanency goal.

**Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.**  How effective is the agency in helping children in foster care return safely to their families when appropriate?
1. Describe circuit strategies, casework practices and resources utilized to assist foster children in returning safely to their families.  In responding, include factors which influence this item such as key stakeholder (internal or external) participation, regional demographics, etc.

2. Discuss the circuit's practice in locating and placing children with relatives or kinship providers.
3. Discuss circuit's performance on reducing time in foster care. Refer to Outcome measure #10 (Children Returning Home by Length of Time Till Reunification) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below. Discuss the impact of this data.

| Outcome #10. Children Returning Home by Length of Time Till Reunification | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % reunified within 12 months | % reunified within 12 months | % reunified within 12 months | % reunified within 12 months |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

4. Identify strengths and/or challenges faced by the circuit on reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives.

**Item 9: Adoption.** How effective is the agency in achieving timely adoption when that is appropriate for a child?
1. Describe circuit strategies, casework practices and resources utilized in achieving timely adoption, such as the availability of adoptive families for children with special needs, sibling groups and older youth.
2. Identify any key stakeholders (internal and external) and include any factors which influence this item such as recruitment and retention of adoptive families, and support services for adoptive families.
3. Discuss circuit's performance on timeliness of adoption. Refer to Outcome measure #11 (Reduce Time in Foster Care – Entry to adoption) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.

| Outcome #11. Children Exiting to Adoption | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % adopted within 24months | % adopted within 24months | % adopted within 24months | % adopted within 24months |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

4. Identify any strengths and/or challenges faced by the circuit on timeliness of adoption.

**Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement.** How effective is the agency in establishing planned permanent living arrangements for children in foster care, who do not have the goal of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives, and providing services consistent with the goal?
1. Describe circuit strategies, casework practices and resources utilized in establishing permanent living arrangements for children in foster care in the above such as the availability of independent living services for older youth.
2. Discuss the local process in determining age appropriateness of APPLA goals for children.
3. Identify any key stakeholders (internal and external) and include any factors influencing the circuit's performance.

4. Identify any strengths and/or challenges in the appropriate use of this goal.

**B. Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.**

**Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement.** How effective is the circuit in placing foster children close to their birth parents or their own communities or counties?
1. Discuss the availability of placement options within the circuit, including the number and types of homes available.
2. Discuss the process staff uses to prevent placement outside the child's community—hold FST's, refer for IIHS in resource home, etc.
3. Discuss the number of children the circuit currently not placed in close proximity and the issues preventing placement in their community. Refer to the Legal Status -1 listing.
4. Discuss the circuit's challenges to placing children in close proximity and any strategies to improve/maintain close proximity placements.
5. Discuss local protocol in making decision about keeping children in close proximity to parents/caregivers (initial placement and ongoing).

**Item 12: Placement with Siblings.** How effective is the circuit in keeping brothers and sisters together in foster care?
1. Discuss the number of children in your circuit who are not currently placed with their sibling group and what are the strategies in place to place them together.
2. Discuss the challenges to placement and any strategies the circuit is using to try and keep sibling groups together.
3. Discuss any casework practices and resource issues affecting this item, such as the availability of placement options.
4. Discuss any collaboration with outside agencies the circuit engages in to keep siblings together.
5. Discuss local protocol in making decisions about keeping siblings together (initial placement and ongoing).

**Item 13: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care.** How effective is the circuit in planning and facilitating visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings placed separately in foster care.
1. Discuss local factors influencing the frequency of visitation regarding child/ parents/siblings.
2. Discuss specific strengths and/or challenges, such as proximity of placement, transportation or other factors which affect visitation within the circuit.
3. Discuss any strategies the circuit has implemented to address the strengths and/or challenges listed above.
4. Discuss local strategies for developing and adhering to visitation plans.

**Item 14: Preserving Connections.** How effective is the circuit in preserving important connections for children in foster care, such as connections to neighborhood, community, faith, family, tribe, school, and friends?

1. Discuss casework practices and resource issues which affect preserving connections, such as emphasis on placing children in close proximity to their communities.
2. Discuss how the circuit complies with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provisions concerning identifying tribal children, notifying tribes, observing placement preferences and involving tribes in decisions regarding Native American children in foster care.
3. Discuss how the circuit identifies cultural and ethnic backgrounds and how the circuit uses the information to better serve the child and preserve connections.
4. Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit has in preserving connections and any strategies in place for this item.

**Item 15: Relative Placement.** How effective is the agency in identifying relatives who could care for children entering foster care, and using them as placement resources when appropriate?
1. Discuss how many children the circuit currently has in relative placement. Discuss the circuit's performance on increasing the placement of children with relatives. Refer to Outcome measure #17 (Increase the number of children placed with relative providers) and report data for the four quarters of FY 07 in the table below.

| Outcome #17. Increase the Number of Children Placed with Relative Providers | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % placed with relatives | % placed with relatives | % placed with relatives | % placed with relatives |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

2. Discuss how the circuit identifies and assesses relatives and non custodial parents for placement.
3. Discuss the strengths and/or challenges the circuit has in making relative placements.

**Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents.** How effective is the agency in promoting or helping to maintain the parent-child relationship for children in foster care, when it is appropriate to do so?
1. Discuss the process local staff uses to identify and engage non custodial parents.
2. Discuss the process local staff uses to work with incarcerated or absent parents.
3. Discuss challenges the circuit has in working with custodial and non custodial parents.
4. Discuss any improvement strategies the circuit has developed to better work with parents of children in foster care.
5. Discuss the type of activities occurring during parent/child visits. In responding include activities such as parent involvement in medical visits, school functions, and etc.

## C. Child and Family Well-Being

**Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.**

**Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents.** How effective is the agency in assessing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents, and in providing

needed services to children in foster care, to their parents and foster parents, and to children and families receiving in-home services?

1.  Discuss how the circuit meets the identified needs of the child/family by utilizing the CD-14, CD-14A.
2.  Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit faces when providing services to meet the assessed needs such as transportation, availability of resources, etc.
3.  Discuss how the re-assessment process is used to ensure needs have been met for children, parents, and foster parents.  (i.e. Family Development Plan, CD-14A.)
4.  Discuss COA case reads and feedback regarding the CD-14 practice and any quality improvement efforts resulting from the information.  In addition use SCR results.  Refer to SCR Results 17 (Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents) and report data for the most recent four quarters in the table below.  Discuss the implications of the data and how it affects permanency for children.

| SCR Results  #17 – Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of child & family needs identified and met | % of child & family needs identified and met | % of child & family needs identified and met | % of child & family needs identified and met |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

**Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning.**  How effective is the circuit in involving parents and children in the case planning process?

1.  Discuss how the circuit involves families and children in identifying strengths and needs, determining goals and service needs and evaluating progress by utilizing the CD-14, CD-14A, CD-14B and FSTs.
2.  Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit faces when involving age appropriate children and families in the case planning process.
3.  Discuss COA case reads and feedback regarding the CD-14 practice and any quality improvement efforts resulting from the information.

**Item 19: Caseworker visits with child**.  How effective are circuit staff in conducing face-to-face visits as often as needed with children in foster care and those who receive services in their home?

1.  Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit faces involving worker (i.e case manager or service worker) visits with the child face-to-face in the placement home.
2.  Discuss how effective are workers' assessments of the needs of children such as safety, permanency, well being and the attainment of case goals.
3.  Discuss COA case reads and feedback regarding the CD-82 practice and any quality improvement efforts resulting from the information.  In addition use SCR results. Refer to SCR Results 19 (Worker visits with Child) and report data for the most recent four quarters in the table below.  Discuss the implications of the data and how it affects permanency for children.

| SCR Results  #19 – Worker Visits with Child |
|---|

| % of Worker visit with child per policy | % of Worker visit with child per policy | % of Worker visit with child per policy | % of Worker visit with child per policy |
|---|---|---|---|
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

**Item 20: Worker visits with parents.** How effective are circuit staff in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with parents of children in foster care and parents of children receiving in-home services?

1. Discuss strengths and/or challenges the circuit faces involving worker (i.e case manager or service worker) visits with the parent face-to-face in the home.
2. Discuss how effective the circuit is meeting the requirements when worker visits with parents are promoting the children's safety, permanency, well being and the attainment of case goals.
3. Discuss COA case reads and feedback regarding the CD-83 practice and any quality improvement efforts resulting from the information. In addition use SCRTe results. Refer to SCR Results 20 (Worker Visits with Parents) and report data for the most recent four quarters in the table below.

| SCR Results #20 – Worker Visits with Parents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of Worker visit with parents per policy | % of Worker visit with parents per policy | % of Worker visit with parents per policy | % of Worker visit with parents per policy |
| QTR 1 - | QTR 2 - | QTR 3 - | QTR 4 - |

**Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.**

**Item 21: Educational needs of the child.** How effective is the circuit in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and those receiving services in their own homes?

1. Discuss how the circuit identifies, assesses and addresses educational needs of children, including children placed in residential facilities and children with specialized educational plans.
2. Discuss the role of the foster parents and birth parents in working with education-related issues.
3. Discuss the circuit's strengths and/or challenges to meeting the educational needs of children. For example, how often are children placed in their home school district?
4. Discuss how educational needs are addressed in FSTs/PPTs.

**Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

**Item 22: Physical health of the child.** How does the circuit ensure the physical health and medical needs of the children are identified in assessments and case planning activities and that those needs are addressed through services?

1. Discuss the strengths and/or challenges to meeting time requirements for initial and ongoing health examinations of children entering foster care.
2. Discuss the role and responsibility of foster parents in obtaining medical care for children.

3. Discuss the protocol for exchanging medical information with birth parents and foster parents.  In responding, describe the differences in practice between foster care and intact family cases (utilizing the SS-6).
4. Discuss resource issues, such as funding, availability and accessibility, which affect the provision of health care services to children in foster care and those children receiving in-home services.
5. Discuss strengths and/or challenges for identifying and addressing dental health care needs of children in foster care.

**Item 23:  Mental/behavioral health of the child.** How does the circuit ensure the mental/behavioral health needs of children are identified in assessments and case planning activities and that those needs are addressed through services?
1. Discuss the strengths and/or challenges for meeting time requirements for assessing initial and ongoing mental health needs of children entering foster care.
2. Discuss the role and responsibility of staff and foster parents in obtaining mental health care for children.
3. Discuss the protocol for exchanging mental health information with birth parents and foster parents.   In responding, describe the differences in practice between foster care and intact family cases (utilizing the SS-6).
4. Discuss resource issues, such as funding, availability and accessibility, which affect the provision of mental health care services to children in foster care and those children receiving in-home services.
5. Discuss strengths and/or challenges for identifying and addressing mental health care needs of children in foster care.

# PART V: Summary of Strengths and Needs

Based on examination of data and narrative responses provided in early sections of this report, summarize the information in response to the following questions.

1. What specific strengths of the circuit's programs have been identified?

2. What specific needs have been identified that warrant further examination? Note which of these needs are the most critical to the outcomes under safety, permanency and well-being for children and families in the circuit.

3. Examine and discuss any other strengths or challenges, not covered above which impact performance on the safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families served by the circuit.